

Gram *another side of this life* Parsons

*the lost recordings
of Gram Parsons 1965–1966*

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Gram Parsons

another side of this life

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another side of this life

the lost recordings of Gram Parsons 1965-1966

1. CODINE 2. WHEEL OF FORTUNE 3. ANOTHER SIDE OF THIS LIFE 4. HIGH FLYIN' BIRD
5. NOVEMBER NIGHTS 6. ZAH'S BLUES 7. REPUTATION 8. THAT'S THE BAG I'M IN 9. WILLIE JEAN
10. THEY STILL GO DOWN 11. PRIDE OF MAN 12. THE LAST THING ON MY MIND
13. HEY NELLIE NELLIE 14. SHE'S THE WOMAN I LOVE / GOOD TIME MUSIC 15. BRASS BUTTONS
16. I JUST CAN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE 17. SEARCHIN' 18. CANDY MAN

Recorded 1965-1966.

Produced for compact disc by
Jim Carlton and Bob Irwin.

Mastered by Bob Irwin at Sundazed Studios,
Coxsackie, NY.

Manufactured under license from Jim Carlton
and the Estate of Gram Parsons.

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another side of this life

Gram Parsons

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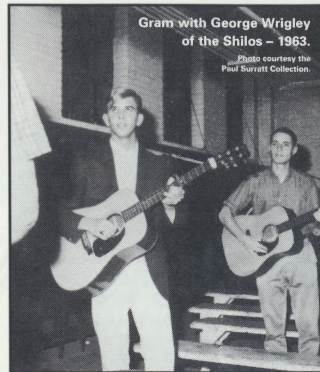
Gram Parsons

"i wore my youth like a crown"
— *Zah's Blues*
Gram Parsons

I was asked to write about Gram Parsons and provide the backstory of these recordings. I've had them in safekeeping for nearly 35 years, sharing them only now and again with those who had a special interest or place in his life. Much credit for their release should go to Roger McGuinn who suggested Bob Irwin at Sundazed Music as someone who would give them the artistic attention and respect they deserve.

Gram and I met in late 1959, hung out as fast friends in our early teenage years, started playing rock and roll together in high school and maintained a mutually valued friendship until his death. I say this to provide a thumbnail sketch of my credentials to write this. With that said, I offer some recollections and observations about someone who has touched the lives of untold numbers of fans and musicians, and a man who helped shape modern music history.

His influence on me is profound, and one of those personal things that's largely indescribable — even amazing in retrospect. If you've ever been lucky enough to have been befriended by someone as magnetic and brilliant as he, you know the feeling. He was the kind of person you knew was in the room even if he was silent and your back was turned. He had a presence like Miles, Gable or Elvis. To many people he was larger than life and his continued cult-hero popularity and music legacy is testimony to that. He



Gram with George Wrigley
of the Shilos - 1963.

Photo courtesy the
Paul Surratt Collection.

was gentlemanly, comfortable with his charisma, often hilariously funny and exuded an urbane quality that would rival Gore Vidal's. Too many think of him as the shy Southern boy shitkicker with a slow drawl, but that's just not so. He had an enviable *qui vive* and zest for life that belied the tragic circumstances of his death. His drug use was no doubt a way of exploring other psychic arenas as opposed to being an escape. Nobody with his personality would want to escape — explore perhaps, but not escape. Pioneers such as he by nature, by definition, seek what's new and different.

His apotheosis and demise have been written about and examined almost continuously since his death, again testimony to his influence, but so often have yielded erroneous conclusions. But in fairness, even those of us who knew him well still disagree because everybody presents different sides of their personality to different people.

What I can attest to is the obvious — his enor



Gram with the Shilos - 1964.
L-R: Paul Surratt, Joe Kelly, Gram
and George Wrigley.

Photo courtesy the
Paul Surratt Collection.

mous talent. His voice, I think, had qualities not unlike Billie Holiday's with similar strengths and frailties. It had an edge that often surrendered to a softness with such magnificent phrasing. Just listen to his recording of "She" from his *GP* album or his very first recording of "Brass Buttons," from this collection, and you'll hear what I mean.

For those who don't know, Gram was influenced by such artists as Fred Neil, Buck Owens, Don Rich, Albert King, George Jones, Gene Pitney, Van Dyke Parks and even the country pop star, Jim Stafford. Stafford was the lead guitarist in our high school rock band The Legends. Jim was three years older than we were and played great guitar even back in 1962. He was the avuncular "older brother" we both looked up to. Truth is, Stafford, was the one who encouraged Gram to play country music. Jim hates for this to be told because he doesn't want to sound as if he's trying to claim credit. But I was there, and I know. No

doubt Jim saw what I did — a kid with the ability to take virtually any form of music and make it his own.

Most of these recordings were made on a splendid Sony 500 reel-to-reel machine that a family friend had brought back from Tokyo. It was one of the best toys a teenage boy ever had.

Our first taping session was in March of 1965 when Gram was home from New York on a visit. By that time his Harvard career was being supplanted by the lure of the folk music scene of Greenwich Village. He was dropping names like Fred Neil, Dick Weissman and Bob Dylan, and was busy making a name for himself playing the old Night Owl Cafe on West 3rd. He was an urban folkie and damn good at it. Several of the tunes on this CD, obviously of their era, to my knowledge, are the only surviving recordings of his foray into the Village folk music scene.

Subsequent tunes here document his exploration and love of R&B ("Searchin'" and "Candy Man"), and others provide a glimpse of the incipient stages of his landmark group The International Submarine Band which many credit as being the archetypal country-rock group.

I'm grateful to the staff at Sundazed for the comprehensive attention they've given this project. Their dedication to the preservation of these recordings without intrusion on the great artistry here serves to underscore Gram's signature valedictory, "Sound as ever."

— Jim Carlton



SARKES TARZIAN

reel no. _____ single track double track 4 track stereo monaural

GRAM PARSONS 4/18/66

REPUTATION - SHE'S THE WOMAN I LOVE
 GOOD TIME MUSIC
 COCAINE
 MULTICOLOR { THAT'S THE BAG I'M IN }
 NOT ON → LITTLE WILLY JEAN
 CAGNETTE

TAPE SPEED	600 FT.	1200 FT.	1800 FT.
SINGLE TRACK 3%	30 MIN.	1 HR.	1 HR. 30 MIN.
DUAL TRACK 3%	1 HR.	2 HRS.	3 HRS.
SINGLE TRACK 7½	15 MIN.	30 MIN.	45 MIN.
DUAL TRACK 7½	30 MIN.	1 HR.	1 HR. 30 MIN.

time chart:

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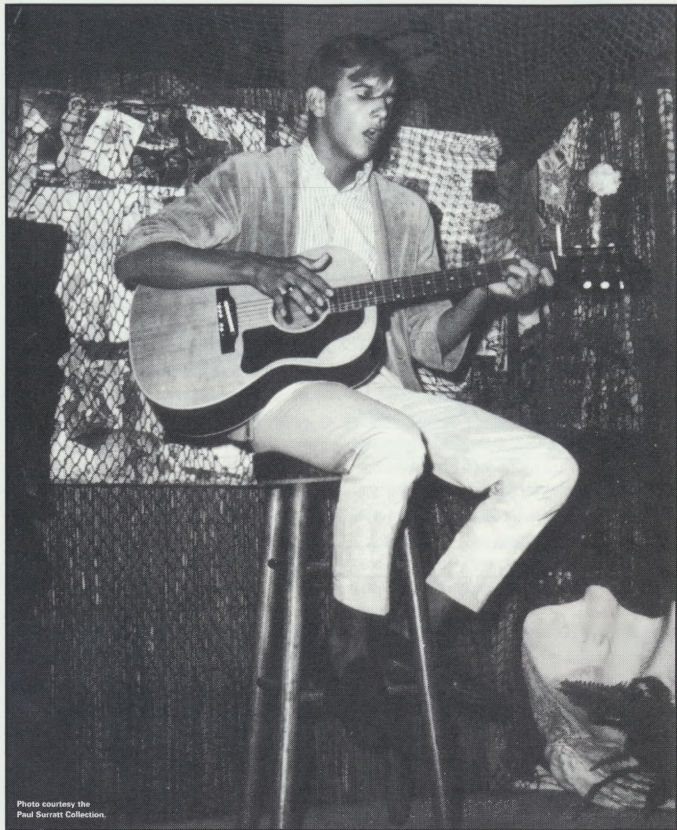


Photo courtesy the Paul Serratt Collection.

Gram Parsons

another side of this life

"I really liked what you wrote about our band," Gram Parsons said. "That review was about the only real thing that ever happened to the Burritos."

"I loved the record," I said.

We had spent the day inside a small caravan with four of the Rolling Stones and quite a few other people, waiting for the fifth Rolling Stone, and now that he had arrived, we were under a large yellow canvas tent, where the Stones were making last-minute adjustments before taking the stage. Gram and I were apart from the others, sitting on the grass in a corner of the tent, talking quietly and keeping a weather eye. All around the tent, people were trying to peek in. A boy looked through a slit in the tent and a Hell's Angel, inside the tent with us, reached through and pushed his face back.

"Would you write me a letter sometime, I'd love to have a letter from you."

"Sure, soon as I get the chance," I said.

"The lines you quoted about not feeling at home anywhere — that was really good, that was really where I was at when we did that album."

That night would be a long one and the last for a young black man named Meredith

Hunter and three others at Altamont. It was a terrible experience that brought Gram and me closer together.

Though we grew up in the same small town, Waycross, Georgia, we had not met until a few months before, on October 19, 1969, in Los Angeles. Gram was twenty-three; I was twenty-seven, already a codger. He'd lived in Waycross between 1946 and 1958; I'd been there for most of those years, but we'd gone to different churches, different schools. Gram's friends were my friends' younger brothers. We just missed each other.

Ten years later, the Rolling Stones brought us together. The first I knew of Gram, I was at the Rolling Stones' office in London, September 1968, and they had an acetate of the Byrds' new album, *Sweetheart of the Rodeo*. The folk-rock band's personnel had changed; now they included this person, Gram, who was to me at that point only a voice. He seemed to have seduced them into a country-gospel mode that I found more interesting than most of what they'd done before. Soon, though, he left the Byrds. He next surfaced at the helm of an outfit called the Flying

Burrito Brothers. I reviewed their first album for *Rolling Stone*.

Neither of Gram's parents were Waycross natives. His father, Ingram Cecil Connor, Jr., was from Columbia, Tennessee. Like his own father, Ingram, Jr., attended Columbia Military Academy. Instead of going on to business school and traveling for a hardware concern as the original Ingram had done, Jr. went to Auburn, where he studied mechanical engineering, hoping to work in aeronautics. Which he did, leaving the university two months before graduation to attend flight school in Oklahoma. The Second World War was under way, and Jr. entered it before the rest of the country, enlisting in March 1941 in the Army Air Force as a second lieutenant. He was stationed in Hawaii when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor.

During 1942 and 1943 Ingram flew fifty combat missions over Australia and New Guinea. He received a presidential unit citation for "extraordinary heroism against an armed enemy," was promoted to major, but came down with malaria and transferred to Bartow Field in Florida. There he met John Snively, a young man from nearby Winter Haven, and Snively's sister, Avis. Their father was John Snively, owner of Snively Groves and most of the oranges in Central Florida. Ingram and Avis married on March 22, 1944, and Ingram went to work at a box factory his father-in-law owned in Waycross, Georgia. On November 5, 1946, their first child, Ingram Cecil Connor III, was born. A daughter,

Avis, came along in 1951.

On Tuesday, December 23, 1958, Ingram, Jr., was found dead in the Connors' house at 1600 Suwannee Drive in Waycross. He had been shot in the right temple. A .38 caliber pistol was found near the body. The shooting was ruled accidental by the excessively polite coroner's jury, some of whom were friends of mine. Ingram III had just turned twelve. He never lived in Waycross again.

Within months Avis married a man named Robert Ellis Parsons, who sold construction equipment for roads and bridges. He adopted Ingram and his sister, Little Avis, then eight years old. Ingram Connor III became Gram Parsons. Though he was attractive, talented, and smart, Gram's education was troubled, with expulsions and relocations. The day before his high school graduation in June of 1965, his mother died of alcoholic malnutrition.

Accepted at Harvard, Gram lasted from September 1965 to February 1966. Just over two years later, he was a member of the Byrds.

When we met, in October of 1969, there seemed to me something at once inevitable and astonishing about it—the Rolling Stones return to the USA for a comeback tour and the two Americans in the house with them are both from Waycross, Georgia. Weird. But Gram met people in that magical way all his life. Elvis Presley, Jim Carlton, Jim Stafford, John and Michelle Phillips, Brandon De Wilde, Fred Neil, Peter Fonda, all were people Gram just happened to meet. He happened to meet David Crosby's fiancée, take her away from Crosby, and

replace Crosby when the Byrds fired him. Then he happened to meet Keith Richards. A year later, he and I met. Four years later, he was dead at 26.

Twenty-six years after that, I accepted an award from the lieutenant governor of Georgia inducting Gram into the Georgia Music Hall of Fame. That was last September. In the years since his death Gram has become steadily more famous and more influential. The list of musicians inspired by Gram is too long to present here, but it includes such artists as Emmylou Harris, Elvis Costello, the Black Crowes, the Kentucky Headhunters, Son Volt, Wilco, Beck, the Eagles, Steve Earle, Dwight Yoakam, and Lucinda Williams. Kinky Friedman, recently returned from a trip to Finland and Norway, said that young members of the audiences in those countries asked him about two people, Townes Van Zandt and Gram Parsons, but primarily about Gram. "It's as if Gram has become a latter-day James Dean," he said.

It's been years now since I've had the dream about Gram, the one I had many times following his death. I would see him and tell him that I'd heard he was dead, his body burned in the desert. He would smile a quiet rueful smile and say softly, "That was just a rumor." I remember in one dream we were swimming underwater in a cave through a submerged stone tunnel, and I noticed that Gram didn't seem to need to breathe. The meaning seems clear to me now: Gram didn't, and doesn't, need to breathe to carry on his work. His brief life was just a preparation for all the work he



would do, the lives he would touch, after he'd gone.

That night, though, at Altamont, when the music and the killing stopped, we wanted to get the hell away from there. The helicopter for the Stones and the rest of us who were with them was parked at the top of a hill somewhere in the black night behind the stage. Calling to each other, we stumbled over dead grass and dusty clay, through a cyclone fence (somebody'd cut a hole in it), piled into a car and an ambulance, and rode up to the helicopter. Gram, Michelle Phillips, and I watched the Stones and everybody else with them get on board. Two boys from Waycross, politely letting the others escape. I'm sure Gram was thinking, as I was, What the hell am I going to do if there isn't room on that 'copter? But Sam Cutler, the Stones' tour manager, called, "Gram! Stanley! Come on." So Michelle boarded, then Gram. The last thing you see before the door closes (in the documentary film *Gimme Shelter*) is the seat of my Levi's.

Overloaded, the aircraft nearly crashed on landing. We'd flown to a small airport where a fifteen-seater plane was waiting. When we were about to board, one of the too-plentiful (even in those days) publicity people tried to tell Gram and Michelle there wasn't room for them, there'd be another plane soon. Not liking the idea of leaving my homie in a cold lonely airport, I spoke to Keith, and soon we were all in San Francisco, heading back to the Huntington Hotel in limos. I was riding with Gram and Michelle. "We wouldn't

even be here if it wasn't for you," Gram told me. "Thanks a lot."

"It was nothing," I said.

A few days later I went to England, where I lived for several months. Gram and I tried to arrange an English tour for the Burrito Brothers, but it didn't work out. We saw each other again in California, but he left the Burritos, went on the road with the Fallen Angels, and we lost touch. I went off to the Arkansas Ozarks where, one day in 1973, I picked up a newspaper and read that he'd died. Looking back on it now, I understand that the reports of his death were highly exaggerated, or as you might say, just a rumor.

— Stanley Booth

Photo courtesy the Paul Surratt Collection.

- 1. CODINE**
(Buffy Sainte-Marie) 5:34
recorded April 18, 1966
- 2. WHEEL OF FORTUNE**
(Gram Parsons) 2:27
recorded December 26, 1965
- 3. ANOTHER SIDE OF THIS LIFE**
(Fred Neil) 2:38
recorded December 26, 1965
- 4. HIGH FLYIN' BIRD**
(Wheeler) 3:46
recorded December 26, 1965
- 5. NOVEMBER NIGHTS**
(Gram Parsons) 3:35
recorded December, 1966
- 6. ZAH'S BLUES**
(Gram Parsons) 3:59
recorded March 13, 1965
- 7. REPUTATION**
(Tim Hardin) 3:07
recorded April 18, 1966
- 8. THAT'S THE BAG I'M IN**
(Fred Neil) 3:11
recorded April 18, 1966
- 9. WILLIE JEAN**
(Trad.) 4:05
recorded April 18, 1966
- 10. THEY STILL GO DOWN**
(Dick Weissman) 2:24
recorded March 13, 1965
- 11. PRIDE OF MAN**
(Hamilton Camp) 2:42
recorded March 13, 1965
- 12. THE LAST THING ON MY MIND**
(Tom Paxton) 3:42
recorded March 13, 1965
- 13. HEY NELLIE NELLIE**
(David Fromer-Jonathan Fromer-Elbert Robinson) 3:02
recorded March 13, 1965
- 14. SHE'S THE WOMAN I LOVE / GOOD TIME MUSIC**
(Danny Adams-Sam Moffitt-Sam Moffitt Jr.) / (John Sebastian) 4:55
recorded April 18, 1966

15. BRASS BUTTONS

(Gram Parsons) 2:22
recorded December 26, 1965

16. I JUST CAN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE

(Gram Parsons) 3:26
recorded December, 1966

17. SEARCHIN'

(J.Leiber-M.Stoller) 3:29
recorded December 26, 1965

18. CANDY MAN

(Reverend Gary Davis) 3:17
recorded December 26, 1965

Produced for compact disc by Jim Carlton and Bob Irwin.
Mastered by Bob Irwin at Sundazed Studios, Coxsackie, NY.

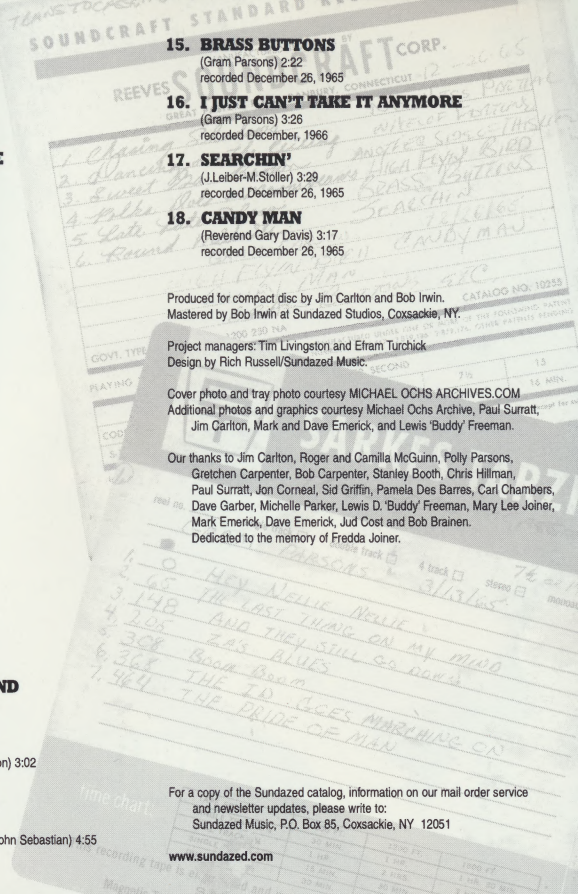
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Dedicated to the memory of Fredda Joiner.

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Gram in Greenville, South Carolina, 1963.

Photo courtesy the Paul Surratt Collection.



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THE LOST RECORDINGS OF GRAM PARSONS

A major find! Loaded with never-before-heard '65-66 demos of the legendary Gram Parsons—country-rock pioneer and former member of the Byrds and Flying Burrito Brothers—this stunning treasure trove includes earliest-known, acoustic versions of signature Parsons anthems “Brass Buttons”, “November Nights” and others.

Gram
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